

Residence guide – for your stay in Japan

There are quite a few things you will need to learn when you start to live in Japan. Certain things can be considered as a crime, and if you are not aware of this, you may get yourself in trouble. Also, it is important to respect manners in Japan and to get along well with Japanese people, especially people in your neighborhood.

Japanese Rules and Manners:

In Japan, people live according to the following types of rules and manners. To avoid unnecessary problems, foreigners living in Japan should respect the rules and manners of Japan.

- Throwing away garbage in a garbage bin.

Do not throw away garbage in the street. Always use a garbage bin.

- Follow rules for disposing of garbage.

When disposing of garbage, pay attention to the day, time, location and kind of garbage.

Do not dispose of bulky waste illegally.

Please note:

* To dispose of bulky waste, follow the rules determined by the City Hall where you live.

- Do not take garbage away from disposal sites.

Some of the waste at the disposal site will be used as a resource for recycling.

- If you live in an apartment or rental property, always obey the rules in the rental agreement.

Without permission from the landlord, you will not be able to:

- add other renters,
- rent to other people,

- renovate the rooms, and
- keep pets

Breaking your rental agreement may result in an expulsion order!

- Smoke tobacco in designated smoking areas.

Do not smoke while walking around or in areas other than designated smoking areas. Do not litter your cigarette butts. Failure to comply can result in fines!

- Do not talk on your phone or have loud conversations on the train or bus.

This will annoy other people riding on the train or bus.

- Do not leave objects in the hallway of your apartment or condominium.

The hallway of your apartment or condominium is a shared space for everyone. If there are objects in the hallways, they may prevent an escape in case of fire or earthquake.

Depending on the severity of the issue, this may result in an expulsion order!

- Do not speak loudly or listen to music at high volume in your room or in the hallway.

If you are too loud, someone may call the police. If the police receive a complaint, they may respond and act accordingly!

- Do not take ride someone else's bicycle, even if it is abandoned. Riding a bicycle left at a station or by the road can result in imprisonment for up to 1 year or fine of up to 100,000 yen. Most bicycles in Japan are registered and have numbers.

- Shoplifting is a crime.

Shoplifting refers to taking products from a store without paying for them.

Shoplifting is a crime and it includes theft, transport, or helping someone to get away with it.

The penalty is imprisonment for up to 10 years or fine of up to

500,000 yen.

Shops in Japan:

- Have security cameras!
- Have security guards dressed in plainclothes!

There is a high likelihood of getting caught shoplifting!

Japanese Laws to be Aware of:

■ Do not share commuter tickets or health insurance certificates. If you use someone else's commuter ticket or health insurance certificate or lend your commuter ticket or health insurance to someone else knowing that they will use it inappropriately, you may be imprisoned for up to 10 years.

■ Do not carry dangerous items. If caught in possession of dangerous items such as knives or swords without an appropriate reason, you may be subject to investigation or criminal punishment.

Please note:

The following are not considered appropriate reasons for carrying a weapon:

- Self-protection.
- Carrying for non-specific purpose or general convenience.
- Carrying for fashion as an accessory.
- It was used for work or camping but you never put it away so it was just left in the bag.

Take Care when Riding a Bicycle:

■ When you purchase or receive a bicycle, please ensure that you register it.

When you purchase a bicycle, registering it as new bicycle is required. This includes registering a change of name if required.

* Registering a change of name can be performed at your nearest bicycle shop. You will need to bring 500 yen for the fee, your residence card and the bicycle registration card (if you have it).

- Park your bicycle in designated bicycle parking spaces.

If you do not park in a designated location and just park in front of a station, the bicycle will be removed. To get your bicycle back, you may need to pay a fee.

For example: In Toshima it is 5,000 yen and in Shinjuku it is 3,000 yen.

- If you find a lost item, bring it to a police box.

If you keep a lost wallet, money or cards, it may result in imprisonment for up to 1 year or a fine of up to 100,000 yen.

* If you lose something, submit a lost item report to the police near you so that you can get it back when it is found. If you lose something in Japan and submit a report, there is a high likelihood that you will get it back.

- Illegal riding has become strictly enforced.

As of June 1, 2015:

Cyclists receiving warnings for ignoring traffic signals, riding while using a cellphone, not stopping briefly and other inappropriate and/or dangerous riding twice or more within three years must take a course within three months.

If they do not take the course, then they will have to pay a fine of up to 50,000 yen.

In Japan the same laws apply to bicycles and cars!

Five rules for riding bicycles:

- 1) You need to ride on a car lane except in some cases.

In the following situations, it is acceptable to ride a bicycle on the sidewalk:

- When there is a sign indicating that bicycles are allowed.
- When the person riding is a child under 13, a senior, aged 70 or older, or a person with physical disabilities.
- When it is difficult to stay on the left edge of the road due to construction, etc.

- 2) Ride on the left edge of the road.

Stay left of center on roads.

- 3) Pedestrians have the right of way on sidewalks. Bicycles keep to the side of the road.

On roads with signs indicating that bicycles are permitted on the sidewalk, stay to the road side of center. Always stop briefly if pedestrians will be obstructed.

■ If you work part-time (Even with permission), do not work in adult entertainment.

This includes; Bars, Cabarets, Pubs, Hostess bars, Host clubs, Gaming centers, etc. Even working in these locations as a janitor, dish washer or hall staff is against the law!

If you work in adult entertainment, you may face:

- Imprisonment for up to 3 years or a fine of up to 3,000,000 yen.
- Subject to deportation.

Report illegal residence or illegal employment with the information below:

- Phone 03-5796-7256.
- Via the Immigration Bureau's website.

Be careful when you are working:

■ If you work part-time, make sure you receive a permit in advance.

* Persons that work part-time with a status of residence that does not permit employment such as "Student" or "Dependent", or that will engage in work beyond the work activities permitted by their status of residence as in the cases of "Engineer / Specialist in Humanities / International Services" or "Business Manager", must receive "Permission to Engage in Activity Other than that Permitted in Status of Residence Previously Granted".

If you work without the required permit, this may result in:

- Imprisonment for up to 3 years or fine of up to 3,000,000 yen.
- Deportation.

■ If you work part-time after receiving the permit, do not work more than 28 hours per week.

The total must not exceed 28 hours per week even if you work in

more than one locations!

If you work more than 28 hours per week, it may result in imprisonment for up to 3 years or fine of up to 3,000,000 yen or deportation.

* Persons with a Student status of residence may work up to 8 hours per day (maximum 40 hours per week) during extended breaks defined by the school (summer break, winter break, etc.)

■ Beware of work that asks for a registration fee.

There has been an increase in victims of scams related to taking registration fees without actually providing any work.

Beware of work that asks for a registration fee or referral fee before you start the work.

■ If you work part-time after receiving the permit, be careful of work that is similar to adult entertainment.

- Restaurants with entertainment for customers.
- Massage parlors with sexual services.

Working in these places can result in investigation!

Even if the manager says "This is not adult entertainment so exchange students can work here", it is the police that will decide whether it is adult entertainment. Even if you were unaware, working in such an establishment may result in punishment!

■ You cannot work if you leave your school.

If students leave school or that are expelled, even with the correct status of residence and permit.

■ Do not provide your home as a place for travelers to stay for a fee.

As a rule, if you receive a fee for having people stay, you must receive a permit from the Health Center!

Operating overnight accommodations without a permit is not allowed.

■ Using other people's credit cards to order products or services online, etc. is prohibited.

■ Receiving packages in someone else's name, forwarding to someone else or to a designated location is against the law.

These kinds of actions hide organized crime. People may become accomplices to crime without realizing it. Don't get involved just because it appears to be easy money.

These actions may be:

Illegal unauthorized computer access, Violation of the Act on Prevention of Improper Use of Mobile Voice Communications Services, Theft Violation of the Act on Prevention of Transfer of Criminal Proceeds, Fraud, Counterfeiting private seals or other crimes and result in police investigation.

■ The following are crimes.

Beware of work that promises easy earnings.

- Selling or transferring cellphones, cash cards or bank books.
- Making contracts for other people including cellphones or bank accounts.
- Withdrawing money using someone else's cash card.

■ Please comply when police or an official from the Immigration Bureau ask you to present your Residence Card.

Please note:

* Police and officials from the Immigration Bureau must have identification when requesting a foreign national to present their Residence Card and will present their identification when asked to by a foreign national.

■ If you have lost your Residence Card, immediately apply at the Immigration Bureau to have it reissued.

* When applying to have it reissued, you will need certification such

as a certificate of loss notification, a certificate of theft notification (these are provided by the police station where the loss/theft was reported; they are not supplied at police boxes), certificate of disaster (issued by the municipality where the disaster occurred), as well as your passport and photograph (for those 16 and older).

Your Residence Card.

■ Always have your residence card with you when you're out of your home.

* Medium to long-term residents not carrying their Residence Card, even if they have other identification such as a passport or health insurance certificate, may be subject to the above crime.

* Medium to long-term residents refers to foreign nationals residing in Japan with a Status of Residence for which the following do not apply.

- 1) Persons with a period of stay of up to three months.
- 2) Persons with a "Short term stay" Status of Residence.
- 3) Persons with a "Diplomat" or "Official" Status of Residence.
- 4) Persons determined by ordinance of the Ministry of Justice to be one of the above.

Note: The following persons, of which (1 to 4) above do not apply, are not medium to long-term residents.

- Persons with special permission for landing or temporary permission for landing
- Special permanent residents
- Persons without a Status of Residence

Reporting Obligations of Medium to Long-term Residents.

■ After immigrating, always notify the City Hall where you will live when your residence has been determined or will change.

If more than 90 days passes without submitting a notification of the new address, this will be subject to loss of status of residence.

Please note:

* Always have your residence card with you when submitting notification of your address to the City Hall.

■ Do not lend or transfer your Residence Card.

* Persons lending or transferring even invalid Residence Cards to other people may be subject to the above punishment.

Beware of counterfeit or modified Residence Cards!

It is possible to confirm the validity of the number of a Residence Card from the website of the Immigration Bureau by simply entering both items.

- Residence Card number.
- Period of validity of a Residence Card.

* Beware that there have been and continue to be cases of inappropriate use of counterfeit and modified Residence Cards. If you find a Residence Card that you suspect is counterfeit or modified, please contact the Tokyo Immigration Bureau.

* Persons that possess a counterfeit or modified Residence Card with the intention to use it, even with a valid residence status, may be subject to serious criminal punishment.

■ If you quit school or change your place of employment, report it to the Immigration Bureau immediately.

* Statuses of residence with reporting obligations

Professor, Highly Skilled Professional, Business Manager, Legal/Accounting Services, Medical Services, Instructor, Intra-company Transferee, Technical Intern, Student, Trainee, Researcher, Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services, Entertainer, Skilled Labor.

Changes with reporting obligations.

- Change of name, address or nullification of associated institution such as school or place of employment.
- Quitting or transfer from school or place of work.
- Completion of contract with employer or entering into a new contract.

■ If you are married, or in other cases when there is a change to your name, birthdate, nationality or gender, notify the Immigration

Bureau immediately.

* When reporting at the Immigration Bureau, you will need to bring your passport, a photograph, your Residence Card, as well as documentation of the change to your name, birthdate, nationality or gender.

CAUTION!

If you have not fulfilled your obligations under the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, when submitting:

- Application for change of status of residence.
 - Application for extension of period of stay,
- it will be evaluated negatively and you may receive an unfavorable result.

- For information about status of residence, etc.

Immigration Information Center Dial 0570-013904

(Weekdays 8:30 to 17:15)

Assistance available in English, Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese and Tagalog!

- For persons whose familial statuses of residence is Spouse or Child of Japanese National, Spouse or Child of Permanent Resident, Dependent or Designated Activities, in the case of divorce or death of spouse, must be reported to the Immigration Bureau immediately.

* Reporting obligation does not apply to people other than those for whom the spouse's activities were the basis of the status of residence.

* In cases of divorce or death of a spouse, it must be reported to both the City Hall (Notification of Divorce, Notification of Death) and the Immigration Bureau.

* Reporting quitting/change of school or place of work/contract, as well as divorce or death of spouse can be performed online.

Useful resources for foreigners living in Japan:

The Japan Times –Major English newspaper in Japan. They also have a Twitter page.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp>

Immigration bureau – Visas, residence status and other important things for your stay in Japan.

<http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/english/tetuduki/index.html>

Japan Student Service Organization – Information for foreign students about studying and living in Japan.

<http://www.jasso.go.jp/en/>

Meat Guy - For shopping of meat and other groceries. Popular among expats in Japan.

<http://www.themeatguy.jp/app/en>

Gaijin Pot – Community site for expats living in Japan

<https://gaijinpot.com/>

Japan Guide

Guide for travel and living in Japan. They have a popular forum page. You can post questions related to Japan and usually a number of people will answer your questions including travel, Japanese language, life in Japan and culture.

<http://www.japan-guide.com>

Foreign Buyers Club – Many items which expats want are available here.

<http://www.fbcusa.com>

Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) It is good to be a member of

JAF as they will come to virtually anywhere in Japan when your car breaks down. <http://www.jaf.or.jp/>

Post Office –Information on Japan Post (domestic and international)
You can get all sorts of information related to posting.
<http://www.post.japanpost.jp/english/>

JAL ABC – offers services of delivering suitcases from your house in Japan to Narita and other airports in Japan. You can travel light within Japan when leaving Japan.
<http://www.jalabc.com/english/>

Japan Luggage Express – Popular shipping services of personal effects for those who are moving from Japan to their home countries. Handles both small and large shipments.
<http://www.jluggage.com>

Narita Airport Flight information – Check the status of your flight when you are leaving Japan to international destinations.
<http://www.narita-airport.jp/en/flight/today.html>